Bush Says Heat Is Off the CIA

9-17-76

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CIA Director George Bush said yesterday that the intelligence community "has weathered the storm" of three years of investigation.

In remarks before a convention of former intelligence officers, Bush ticked off a list of indicators that he said showed a new national attitude favorable toward CIA.

"The mood in Congress is changed," Bush said. "No one is campaigning against strong intelligence."

The CIA director declared a new Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) is "off to a promising start."

"The adversary thing, how we can ferret out corruption, has given way to the more serious question how can we have better intelligence."

Bush also said intelligence recruiters are having a better reception on college campuses—"recruitment is up and the quality of applicants is up."

Despite praise for the new Senate committee, Bush said Congress is a continuing problem for the intelligence community.

In considering possible covert operations, Bush said, "now, weight is given to the risk of disclosure" because seven congressional committees must be informed in "timely fashion."

Bush suggested that he would limit disclosure to individual members of Congress if he had doubts that they would keep the information secret.

"If I know," Bush said, "an individual member will make intelligence information public, I am not going to give it to him."

Legislation to make it a crime for government employees to disclose intelligence sources and methods has been stalled on the Hill, Bush noted.

The director said he "had been instructed to go forward" with a previously proposed plan to have all executive department employees with access to classified information sign a statement they would not make any unauthorized disclosures.